

## **Traveling Companion: Oh to be perfect!**

### **Fr. Michael Tracey**

Recently, while waiting for my flight from Hartsfield International Airport, Atlanta to Gulfport, I decided to pass the time by browsing through some of the stores along the wandering concourse. I rambled into a magazine store. As I gazed on some of the titles, I heard a voice beside me say, "Excuse me." Thinking I was in someone's way, I instinctively, pulled back in order to let them pass. Then I looked down and noticed a petite young woman, about four foot eight inches, peering up at me. Her light brown sweater and dress combination complimented her dark brown eyes and blonde short hair.

She looked toward the ceiling and looked at my six foot frame and said, "See that magazine at the very top, could you get it for me." The wall was covered, floor to ceiling, with plastic magazine holders, each contained copies of magazines.

I looked up and there at the very top was the magazine she requested. I pointed to it and she nodded her approval. I reached up and pulled a copy of the magazine she wanted from its holder. Then I noticed its name, "Shape Up." My eye was drawn to it cover article that said "Searching for the Perfect Body." I smiled as I handed it to her. She thanked me and proceeded to the checkout counter. I'm sure she enjoyed how to find the perfect body as she continued on her next flight.

On arriving home, I got the courage to attack the mountain of mail that awaited me. In its midst, I noticed a No 10 brown envelope in the bundle. It had a Nigerian stamp on it and my name and address was written in pen. Thinking it might be some long lost acquaintance from years ago, I decided to open the envelope. Inside, it contained a letter from some "solicitors and advocates" of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. "RE: Notification of Bequest." It aroused my curiosity so I read on: "Regards to our correspondence, I am please to send you this official notification of Late Sir James Amadi's (KSM) Estate. Sir James Amadi (KSM) made you a beneficiary to the bequest sum of US \$670,000.00 (Six hundred and Seventy Thousand U.S. Dollars) only in this Estate. This is contained in the last codicil to his will.

As I read on, I found out all I had to do "to confirm your ownership of this legacy" was to forward photocopy of any of the following proofs of identity. 1. Driving License. 2. National Identity Card. 3. Passport (Personal Description/Particulars Page(s) Once I forwarded a copy of one of the above, I would simply have to "indicate also the means you would wish to receive the bequest. I await your urgent respond." The letter was sealed and signed with an official stamp.

Out of curiosity, I went on line and typed in James Amadi in a search engine. I knew it. One site, in particular, showed a series of such letters received by a gentleman – all from Nigeria.

That afternoon, a fax arrived, addressed to the attention of the CEO/President. Mark Green, the Head of Delegation to the World Bank in West Africa was rich to the tune of \$22.5 million dollars, currently deposited in a European Security and Finance Company. "I want you to assist me to claim this money as I cannot claim it directly because I am still a civil servant and the code of conduct bureau forbids me to acquire such amount of money."

He asked me to respond to his private email address and wanted to assure me that "there is no risk attached to this transaction."

I hate to admit it but I will not be a Good Samaritan for Mark Green and help him recover his \$22.5 million and I will be delighted to allow any naïve person to have my share of Sir James Amadi's estate.

To be perfectly honest, there are no quick fixes in life. God didn't give us a finished product in creation nor in our bodies but instead, he gave us the opportunity to use the gifts and resources to satisfy the groanings of nature. Why do we feel the urge to search for the "perfect body?" After all, if it is created by God and everything God creates is good, then we need to accept that we already have a perfect body, created by a God who has no place for substitutes.